



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Business Standards Division

Memo

To: Current EMS Medical Directors Identified on Ambulance Licenses issued by EMSTC, Public Health and Human Services

From: Kenneth Threet, EMT Training Coordinator, and Board of Medical Examiners

RE: Update on EMT rules changes and utilization of "Endorsement Curricula"

Date: Tuesday, November 16, 2004

In February 2004, the Montana Board of Medical Examiners adopted new rules concerning the training and licensure of all levels of EMT's in Montana. The rules contain a couple of issues that are important to you, as the Medical Director of an EMS Service.

One item is the allowance of "specialties" for all levels of EMTs. In the rules, specialties are referred to as "endorsements". There are endorsements allowed for all levels of EMTs including EMT-First Responder, EMT-Basic, EMT-I/99 and EMT-Paramedic. They allow Montana licensed EMT personnel to receive specific training and recognition allowing performance of specific procedures and skills. Performance of these endorsements is limited to: the service in which the EMT functions for, your permission as medical director and service protocols. In the past, an individual (EMT) functioning on an EMS service would have had to advance to a higher level of licensure to gain the permission to provide a single skill; such as monitoring an IV while transporting a patient between medical facilities. These endorsements allow the local medical director to tailor the skills provided by the service to the community needs.

The actual curricula for each of the endorsements are provided to the local Medical Director by the state to assure local educational consistency. The Medical Director is encouraged to include: clinical opportunities, skill performance evaluations and a Quality Improvement process to assure competency of the EMT allowed to function at the identified endorsement level. It is possible that an EMT may obtain endorsement training in another community and return to the local EMS service having documentation of a specific endorsement. The Medical Director is encouraged to evaluate the skill and knowledge of the EMT prior to allowing them to function.

The endorsements allowable for EMTs licensed at the **EMT-First Responder** level are: *Immobilization, FR Monitoring and Ambulance*. A Lead Instructor (a local instructor trained by this office) may teach the EMT-F level endorsements, due to the fact that most First Responder agencies do not have nor are required to have a medical director.

The *Immobilization Endorsement* provides the EMT-First Responder the skills to immobilize a patient (splinting and back-boarding) prior to the arrival of the ambulance. Many agencies utilizing EMT-First Responders are part of a tiered response and provide the initial care prior to the arrival of the ambulance and the immobilization skills could be a great asset to the EMS system and patient care.

The *FR-Monitoring Endorsement* allows the EMT-First Responder to utilize a pulse oximeter and glucometer for the purposes of obtaining, recording and reporting the findings. Many EMS systems would like the EMT-First Responder to be able to utilize a pulse oximeter and a glucometer to enhance early assessment findings.

The *Ambulance Endorsement* is to prepare the EMT-First Responder to operate on an ambulance as a care attendant. It provides the EMT-F the minimum knowledge and skill base to function with common equipment found on transporting ambulances. The State of Montana requires an EMT-F with the ambulance endorsement as the minimum staffing requirement for a transporting ambulance. This endorsement includes the Immobilization endorsement as well.

The endorsements allowable for EMTs licensed at the **EMT-Basic** level are: *Airway, IV/IO Maintenance, IV/IO Initiation, EMTB Monitoring, Intubation (>12 years of age), and Medications*. The medical director is responsible to coordinate and oversee the instruction of these endorsements at the EMT-B level. While the medical director may delegate the actual educational offering of these endorsements, they cannot delegate the overall responsibility and accountability for the educational offering.

The *Airway Endorsement* allows the EMT-B to utilize a double lumen airway for airway management. It includes an overview of manual and mechanical airways (oral and nasal) as well as ventilation and oxygen administration. The endorsement allows and reviews the PTL airway and the Combi-Tube.

The *IV/IO Maintenance Endorsement* allows the EMT-Basic to monitor a previously established peripheral IV or IO cannulation and clear fluid

administration. This endorsement has been developed to meet an identified need to transport patients between medical facilities that have been managed by a physician previously. It is not intended for starting peripheral lines out-of-hospital.

The *IV/IO Initiation Endorsement* allows the EMT-Basic to initiate and manage peripheral IV and IO cannulation and infuse clear fluids (NS, D5W, D10W LR). This endorsement includes the IV/IO Maintenance Endorsement.

The *EMTB Monitoring Endorsement* allows the EMT-Basic to utilize a pulse oximeter and a glucometer for the purposes of obtaining, recording, reporting, interpreting and utilizing the readings to modify patient care. This endorsement enhances the EMT-Basic's ability to accurately assess and manage the out-of-hospital patient.

The *Intubation Endorsement* allows the EMT-Basic to manage the airway of an unconscious, unresponsive, and pulseless patient with an endotracheal tube. The patient's age must be in excess of 12 years of age. The endorsement allows direct visualized intubation of the adult.

The *Medication Endorsement* allows the EMT-Basic to carry and utilize the medications that previously EMT-Basic's were allowed to assist the patient with, provided that the medications are prescribed to that specific patient. The medications included in the endorsement are: EPI (for anaphylactic reactions), nitro (for chest pain), bronchodilators-beta agonist (for difficulty breathing) and glucagon (for diabetic emergencies). The endorsement allows the service to carry and administer the medications as necessary based on the presenting patient's condition.

The endorsements allowable for EMTs licensed at the **EMT-Intermediate/99** level are: *Needle Decompression of the Chest and Surgical Airway, Immunizations, Drips and Pumps, and 12 Lead Transmission*. The medical director is responsible to coordinate and oversee the instruction of these endorsements at the EMT-I/99 level. While the medical director may delegate the actual educational offering of these endorsements, they cannot delegate the overall responsibility and accountability for the educational offering. It should be mentioned here that the new rules adopted the newest EMT-Intermediate curricula (referred to as the 99 curricula). Former EMT-I/85s licensed in Montana, had their licenses adjusted to an EMT-Basic with five (5) endorsements so that they could continue to utilize the skills they had in the past and be able to transition to the new 1999 curricula in the future.

These endorsements are available for the Montana EMT licensed at the EMT-I/99 level only. Curricula for these endorsements have not been completed at present, but should be available spring of 2005. This timetable should coincide with the transition program for EMT-I/85 to EMT-I/99 and other new EMT-I/99 courses that have been completed. The endorsement descriptions are:

The *Needle Decompression of the Chest and Surgical Airway* Endorsement would allow the EMT-I/99 to perform the skill of needle chest decompression and performing an out-of-hospital surgical airway.

The *Immunizations* Endorsement would allow the EMT-I/99 to administer standard immunization medications such as flu vaccine, to assist with the home health, and public health duties in the local area.

The *Drips and Pumps* Endorsement would allow the EMT-I/99 to initiate and maintain drip medications and utilize pumps to manage the flow rates.

The *12 Lead Transmission* Endorsement would allow the EMT-I/99 to obtain and transmit a 12 lead ECG to the Emergency Room or on-line medical control.

The endorsements allowable for EMTs licensed at the **EMT-Paramedic** level are: *12 Lead Interpretation, Medications, Fibrinolytic w/12 Lead Interpretation, and Critical Care Transport*. The medical director is responsible to coordinate and oversee the instruction of these endorsements at the EMT-Paramedic level. While the medical director may delegate the actual educational offering of these endorsements, they cannot delegate the overall responsibility and accountability for the educational offering. It should be mentioned here that the new rules adopted the newest EMT-Paramedic curricula. While former EMT-Paramedics licensed in Montana, have not been required to transition to the newest curricula, there is a transition curricula available. The following endorsements are available for Montana licensed EMT-Paramedics only. Curricula for these endorsements have not been completed at present but should be available early 2005. The endorsement descriptions are:

The *12 Lead Interpretation* Endorsement would allow the EMT-Paramedic to obtain and interpret a 12 lead ECG for the purposes of increasing the assessment information and treatment options.

The *Medications* Endorsement would allow the EMT-Paramedic to administer additional medications that are beyond the standard emergency medications the EMT-P would utilize in the out-of-hospital environment.

This endorsement would be utilized by the out-of-hospital EMT-Paramedic who intermittently transports patients between medical facilities (typically local medical facilities to regional trauma centers) who have been administered medications outside the standard emergency medications normally carried and administered by the EMT-Paramedic.

The *Fibrinolytic and 12 Lead Interpretation* Endorsement would allow the EMT-Paramedic to obtain and interpret a 12 lead ECG for the purposes of increasing assessment information and treatment options including the administration of fibrinolytics in the out-of-hospital setting. This endorsement includes the *12 Lead Interpretation* endorsement.

The *Critical Care Transport* Endorsement would prepare the EMT-Paramedic to manage critically injured or critically managed (ICU / CCU) patients during transports between medical facilities. The curricula will be parallel to other programs offered in other parts of the county.

The overall intent of the endorsement process is to allow you, the local medical director, the ability to modify the local EMS system to meet the needs and capabilities of the community. While the Board of Medical Examiners will continue to license the EMT at four (4) levels, the local medical director now has the tools to allow the local EMS service to provide skills that they feel are important to improve patient care.

The individual EMT, who attends an endorsement program offered by you, will provide you with a "*Verification Form*" to document their attendance and successful completion of the endorsement training program. The state will record the successful completion of the endorsement, based on the submission of the verification form, on the individual's licensure record. Their individual records can be accessed via the web by checking the "licensee lookup" on the web page, www.discoveringmontana.com.

Another item of importance to you as the local Medical Director is the requirement of medical direction for the EMT's performance of any endorsement beyond the EMT-Basic. The rules define any performance of an endorsement beyond the EMT-Basic as "advanced life support" and it requires a medical director to supervise this activity. Therefore, you may be approached by your local EMS system and local EMTs to provide both the endorsement training and medical supervision to the local EMS system. I have been approached by a number of physicians who want to know, what does it mean to be the medical director, and what are the duties associated with this responsibility. We are currently developing a web-based tutorial for the local medical director to receive an overview of medical direction, Montana's EMS system, and the EMS training system.

This web-based tutorial should be available within the next 30-60 days. I'll notify you when this is available and how to access it. In the meantime, the Board of Medical Examiners has established a web site for increasing communications with all EMT personnel, www.discoveringmontana.com/dli\med. This web site contains information concerning the Montana EMT system. On this web site, you can find a copy of the EMT statutes, rules and statewide protocols. Also, you'll find copies of all the endorsement curricula previously discussed. If you have any questions or if you have difficulty accessing the web site, please let me know, I will be happy to assist you.

We are currently updating the local Lead Instructors and have updated 260 so far. The local lead instructor would be a great asset if you feel that the endorsement process would be of value to your community. We are continuing to update additional Lead Instructors and have programs scheduled in Bozeman in November, Great Falls in December and Miles City in March 2005, if someone in your community has not yet attended. Applications can be obtained on the web site.

I hope this overview assists you in understanding the endorsement process recently implemented. We hope this provides you the flexibility to modify your local EMS system to meet the needs of your patients.

Thank you, Ken Threet